

Springfield, PA — Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7), toured Don Guanella School to highlight his support for education for all and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

“I have been familiar with the great work of Don Guanella since I attended high school at Cardinal O’Hara,” noted Joe. “I applaud the school for their work to ensure that all children deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential.”

Since 1960, the Don Guanella School, located in Springfield, has educated and served young men and boys who have a primary diagnosis of mental retardation or other developmental impairments, operating with the belief that every boy, regardless of race, color, creed, ethnic background, or disability, has the right to be afforded every opportunity to develop and attain his optimum potential. Today, the school continues today to serve young men and boys between the ages of six and twenty-one.

The Don Guanella School is named after Blessed Luigi Guanella, who in 1881, founded a religious congregation, the Servants of Charity, whose primary mission is to minister to persons with developmental disabilities. In 1959, this congregation accepted the invitation of two late American Cardinals — Cardinal O’Hara of Philadelphia and Cardinal Mooney of Detroit — to come to this country. The Servants of Charity began their work with boys who had developmental disabilities at Don Guanella School in Pennsylvania and at the St. Louis School, now in Chelsea, Michigan.

“According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 6 million of our schoolchildren receive special education,” added Joe. “I strongly support providing the resources necessary to ensure that all children, regardless of their disability, receive a high quality education.”

In Congress, Congressman Sestak is a member of the Education and Labor Committee, where he has advocated for a high quality education for all students. He recently held two education summits to provide an opportunity for education stakeholders in the 7th Congressional district to discuss key educational issues with policy makers and education experts. The first summit consisted of panel discussions on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Special Education, led by the Honorable George Miller, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, and the Honorable Terrell Halaska, Assistant Secretary of Education. The second summit explored the challenges facing our Higher

Education system and Advanced Training programs and included Congressman Rubén Hinojosa, the Chairman of the US House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness as a guest panelist. Congressman Sestak has also signed on as a major sponsor of H.R. 627, the Keep our PACT Act, which would fully-fund No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by 2014.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

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